

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2266

ANSWERED ON:14.03.2007

RENEWAL OF TREATIES WITH BHUTAN AND NEPAL

Deora Shri Milind Murli; Hussain Shri Anwar; Singh Shri Mohan

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is contemplating to renew the Treaties with Bhutan and Nepal;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the salient features of the proposed treaties and the previous treaties; and
- (d) the details of the agenda undertaken for mutual cooperation with these countries?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a)-(b) Government have updated the Treaty relating to the promotion of, and fostering the relations of friendship and neighbourliness signed on August 8, 1949 with Bhutan. The updated India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty signed on February 8, 2007 reflects our mutual desire to enhance our relationship to an even higher level of cooperation and goodwill to meet the aspirations of our two peoples for a better life.

During the visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. G.P. Koirala to India in August, 2000, the Governments of India and Nepal had agreed to undertake a review of all issues pertaining to the 1950 Treaty. This was reiterated in the Joint Press Statements issued by the two Governments in 2002 and 2004 with a view to further strengthening of bilateral relations.

(c) The updated India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty reiterates that there shall be perpetual peace and friendship between India and Bhutan. It removes provisions which have become obsolete over time. It includes fresh provisions for consolidating and expanding economic cooperation for mutual and long-term benefit, and cooperation in the fields of culture, education, health, sports, and science and technology. It does not envisage a change in the treatment of nationals of both countries, or in the free trade regime that we have. The Treaty commits both countries to cooperate closely with each other on issues relating to their national interests, and not allow the use of their territories for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other.

(d) Government have a wide-ranging agenda of mutually beneficial cooperation with both countries. We have, over the years, worked closely with Bhutan and Nepal to ensure that our natural linkages are translated into meaningful trade, economic, commercial and cultural ties. Initiatives are underway to improve connectivity and strengthen infrastructure on our borders with these countries. Government of India also have development cooperation programmes with Bhutan and Nepal to assist them in their socio-economic development keeping in view the specific priorities of each of the two countries.